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Bureau of Labor Statistics Programs
P.O. Box 2981
Little Rock, AR 72203-2981
(501) 682-3198

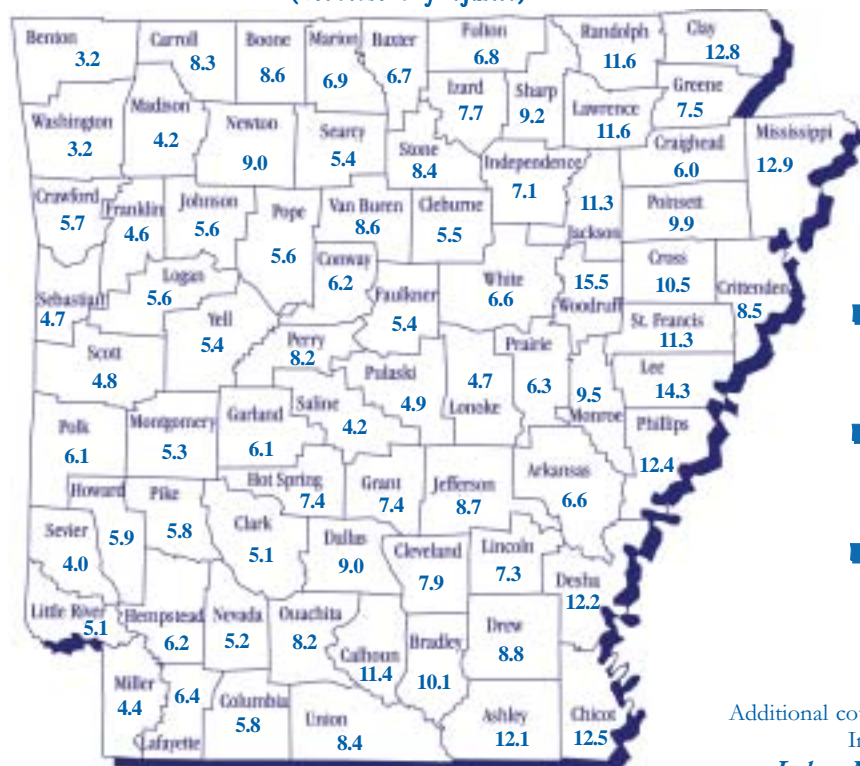
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Arkansas Unemployment Rates by County February 2004 (Not Seasonally Adjusted)



Over the year, nonfarm payroll employment in Arkansas advanced 3,600. Service providing industries gained 9,000 jobs, while goods producing industries lost 5,400 jobs.

Employment in **education and health services** rose 3,300 over the year. Health care and social assistance facilities accounted for the growth.

Government, which includes federal, state and local agencies, as well as educational facilities, has added 2,200 positions since February 2003.

The **trade, transportation and utilities** sector added 2,100 jobs. Increased hiring in truck transportation and at general merchandise stores was largely responsible for the growth.

Led by advances at finance and insurance companies, the number of workers in the **financial activities** sector rose 1,000 over the year.

Compared to the previous year, employment in **leisure and hospitality** advanced 900. Hiring in the accommodations and food segment accounted for most of the gain.

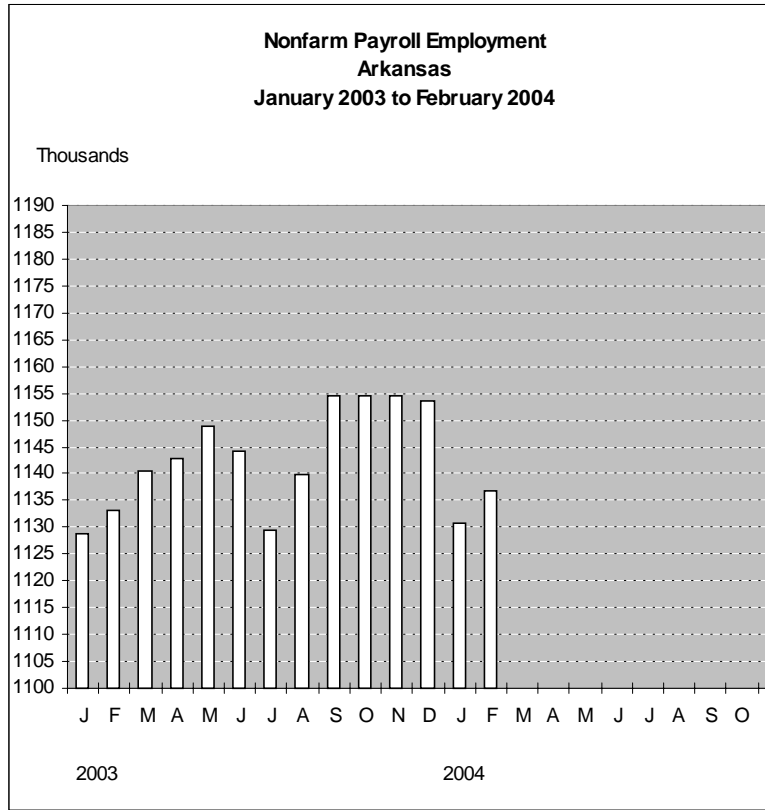
The employment count in **other services** was up 100.

Manufacturing industries have lost 4,500 (-2.2 percent) jobs since February 2003, following a downward trend seen nationwide. Durable goods accounted for 3,600 of this loss and nondurable goods made up 900. The largest loss (-1,200) was in the furniture and related products industry.

Construction employment fell by 900 positions. Job losses were seen in both “construction of buildings” and “heavy construction.” The completion of large projects triggered cutbacks in the heavy construction segment.

Employment in the **professional and business services** sector was down 500 over the year.

The employment count in **natural resources and mining** was unchanged, and jobs in **information** declined 100.



Consumer Price Index for the United States: February 2004					
1982-1984=100 Base					
	Feb. 04	Jan. 04	Feb. 03	Percent Change Since:	
				Jan. 04	Feb. 03
All Urban Consumers	186.2	185.2	183.1	+ 0.5	+ 1.7
Urban Wage Earners & Clerical Workers	181.9	180.9	179.2	+ 0.6	+ 1.5

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Hours & Earnings of Production Workers in Manufacturing Industries - State of Arkansas									
NAICS Industry	Average Weekly Earnings		Average Weekly Hours		Average Hourly Earnings				
	Feb. 2004	Jan. 2004	Feb. 2003	Feb. 2004	Jan. 2004	Feb. 2003	Feb. 2004	Jan. 2004	Feb. 2003
Manufacturing	\$532.46	\$531.98	\$528.06	39.5	39.7	39.0	\$13.48	\$13.40	\$13.54
Durable Goods	562.11	551.35	520.33	41.0	40.6	39.3	13.71	13.58	13.24
Wood Products	611.28	587.12	560.30	43.2	42.3	43.2	14.15	13.88	12.97
Fabricated Metals	570.65	555.74	564.79	40.5	40.3	40.4	14.09	13.79	13.98
Nondurable Goods	499.72	512.16	537.16	37.8	38.8	38.7	13.22	13.20	13.88
Food	378.92	394.54	446.50	36.4	37.9	38.0	10.41	10.41	11.75

Technical Notes

“Labor Market Trends” is prepared monthly in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The current month's estimates are preliminary, while all previous data are subject to revision.

Estimates of nonfarm payroll jobs show the number of jobs by industry and reflect employment by place of work.

Hours and earnings estimates are based on payroll and worker-hour data collected for production workers in manufacturing industries.

Industries are classified according to the North American Industry Classification System.

All estimates are based on a first quarter 2003 benchmark.

Explanation of Terms and Concepts

Monthly Business Survey of Employers - A monthly sample survey designed to provide industry information on nonfarm payroll jobs. Data are compiled each month from mail questionnaires and telephone interviews by the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board in cooperation with BLS. The data are based on establishment records and include all workers, full- or part-time, who received pay during the payroll period which includes the 12th of the month. Approximately 4,000 business establishments are included in the Arkansas survey.

Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) - A term applied by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget to counties that have one or more central cities and that meet specified criteria of population density, commuting patterns and social and economic integration.

Current Population Survey (CPS)- A monthly sample survey of the population 16 years of age and over, designed to provide data on the labor force, the employed and the unemployed. The survey is conducted each month by the Bureau of the Census for BLS. The information is col-

lected by trained interviewers from a sample of about 50,000 households. The data collected are based on the activity reported for the calendar week including the 12th of the month. A total of 871 Arkansas households are represented in the sample survey.

Civilian Labor Force - The sum of all employed and unemployed persons 16 years of age or older. Members of the Armed Forces are excluded.

Employment - An estimate of the number of persons who worked any time for pay or profit or worked 15 hours or more as unpaid workers in a family business during the calendar week which includes the 12th of the month. Also included are those who, although not working, had some job attachment and were not looking for work, and persons involved in labor management disputes.

Unemployment - An estimate of the number of persons who did not have a job, but were available for work and actively seeking work during the calendar week which includes the 12th of the month.

Unemployment Rate - The number of unemployed as a percentage of the civilian labor force.

Seasonal Adjustment - A statistical technique applied to monthly data to eliminate changes that normally occur during the year due to such seasonal events as changes in the weather, major holidays, shifts in production schedules, harvest times, and the opening and closing of schools.

Consumer Price Index (CPI) - A measure of the average change in prices over time of a fixed market basket of goods and services. It is based on prices of food, clothing, shelter, fuels, transportation fares, and other items that people buy for day-to-day living. The CPI shown in this publication represents the U.S. city average and is not seasonally adjusted. There is no separate consumer price index for Arkansas.

Labor Force Statistics				
Arkansas (Seasonally Adjusted)	February 2004	January 2004	February 2003	
Civilian Labor Force	1,310,600	1,307,900	1,270,900	
Employment	1,238,800	1,240,000	1,198,100	
Unemployment	71,800	67,900	72,800	
Rate	5.5	5.2	5.7	
Arkansas (Not Seasonally Adjusted)				
Civilian Labor Force	1,296,900	1,286,700	1,257,300	
Employment	1,216,300	1,206,500	1,175,600	
Unemployment	80,600	80,200	81,700	
Rate	6.2	6.2	6.5	
Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers				
Civilian Labor Force	175,550	173,200	165,150	
Employment	170,025	167,925	160,250	
Unemployment	5,525	5,275	4,900	
Rate	3.2	3.1	3.0	
Fort Smith				
Civilian Labor Force	100,625	100,225	97,925	
Employment	95,275	94,950	92,100	
Unemployment	5,350	5,275	5,825	
Rate	5.3	5.3	5.9	
Jonesboro				
Civilian Labor Force	45,450	45,425	43,875	
Employment	42,725	42,800	41,575	
Unemployment	2,725	2,625	2,300	
Rate	6.0	5.8	5.2	
Little Rock-North Little Rock				
Civilian Labor Force	317,300	315,375	305,975	
Employment	301,875	300,025	290,475	
Unemployment	15,425	15,350	15,500	
Rate	4.9	4.9	5.1	
Pine Bluff				
Civilian Labor Force	37,675	37,200	36,175	
Employment	34,375	33,875	32,600	
Unemployment	3,300	3,325	3,575	
Rate	8.7	8.9	9.9	
United States Unemployment Rates:				
Seasonally Adjusted	5.6	5.6	5.9	
Not Seasonally Adjusted	6.0	6.3	6.4	

Note: MSA data are not seasonally adjusted.



Pine Bluff Metropolitan Statistical Area

Jobs Gain Ground in February

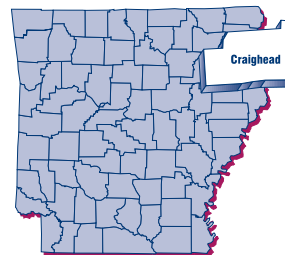
Total nonfarm payroll jobs for the Pine Bluff MSA experienced a healthy recovery (+300) in February from the drop (-300) experienced from December 2003 to January 2004. Service providing industries added 200 new jobs. The government sector contributed the largest increase (+300) due to continued staffing of student workers and nonteaching personnel after semester break. The education and health services sector (+100) increased manpower to accommodate more children entering day care as a result of more jobs being created. Goods producing industries logged seasonal increases of 100 jobs.

Over the year, impressive gains were posted in total nonfarm payroll jobs. A 2.3 percent gain (800 jobs) was reflected in six of the major industry sectors. Goods producing industries created 400 new jobs. The service providing industry also created 400 jobs over the year in four of its sectors from the trickle-down effect. The job count in wholesale trade was unchanged, but the retail sector reduced its workforce over the year.

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs

North American Industry Classification	Feb. 04	Jan. 04	Feb. 03
Total Nonfarm	36,100	35,800	35,300
Goods Producing	8,100	8,000	7,700
Natural Resources & Construction	900	900	800
Manufacturing	7,200	7,100	6,900
Nondurable Goods	4,500	4,500	4,400
Service Providing	28,000	27,800	27,600
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	6,300	6,500	6,400
Wholesale Trade	1,000	1,000	1,000
Retail Trade	4,000	4,100	4,100
Transportation, Warehouse, & Utilities	1,300	1,400	1,300
Information	200	200	200
Financial Activities	1,300	1,300	1,300
Professional & Business Services	2,300	2,300	2,200
Education & Health Services	5,500	5,400	5,400
Leisure & Hospitality	2,200	2,200	2,100
Other Services	1,400	1,400	1,400
Government	8,800	8,500	8,600
Federal Government	1,800	1,800	1,700
State Government	3,400	3,200	3,400
Local Government	3,600	3,500	3,500

Jonesboro Metropolitan Statistical Area



Nonfarm Job Total Drops Slightly in February

The total number of nonfarm payroll jobs declined in the Jonesboro MSA in February by 300. Reductions were in the construction-mining, education-health services and government groups. The number of jobs in the remaining seven industries held constant.

A look at the yearly employment picture for the Jonesboro MSA showed totals for major industries were unchanged, except for two--manufacturing and education-health services. Declines of 100 each produced a year-to-year drop of 200, leaving the nonfarm count at 40,500.

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs

North American Industry Classification	Feb. 04	Jan. 04	Feb. 03
Total Nonfarm	40,500	40,800	40,700
Construction & Mining	1,900	2,000	1,900
Manufacturing	7,500	7,500	7,600
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	7,800	7,800	7,800
Information	700	700	700
Financial Activities	1,500	1,500	1,500
Professional & Business Services	3,100	3,100	3,100
Education & Health Services	6,500	6,600	6,600
Leisure & Hospitality	3,600	3,600	3,600
Other Services	1,500	1,500	1,500
Government	6,400	6,500	6,400

Fayetteville - Springdale - Rogers Metropolitan Statistical Area



Nonfarm Payroll Jobs

North American Industry Classification	Feb. 04	Jan. 04	Feb. 03
Total Nonfarm	173,900	172,400	169,300
Goods Producing	37,600	37,700	37,700
Natural Resources, Mining, & Construction	7,800	7,800	7,200
Manufacturing	29,800	29,900	30,500
Durable Goods	12,400	12,400	12,900
Fabricated Metals	3,600	3,600	3,600
Nondurable Goods	17,400	17,500	17,600
Food	12,200	12,400	12,600
Service Providing	136,300	134,700	131,600
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	42,800	43,000	41,200
Wholesale Trade	7,900	8,000	7,300
Retail Trade	17,600	17,700	16,900
General Merchandise Stores	4,800	4,900	5,000
Transportation, Warehouse, & Utilities	17,300	17,300	17,000
Information	2,300	2,300	2,200
Financial Activities	6,700	6,700	6,400
Professional & Business Services	26,900	26,600	26,700
Employment Services	3,200	3,000	3,400
Education & Health Services	16,000	15,900	15,200
Hospitals	4,700	4,700	4,500
Leisure & Hospitality	13,500	13,200	13,000
Other Services	4,800	4,700	4,600
Government	23,300	22,300	22,300
Federal Government	1,900	1,900	1,700
State Government	8,800	7,900	8,400
Local Government	12,600	12,500	12,200

Seasonal Increases Posted in Nonfarm Payroll Employment

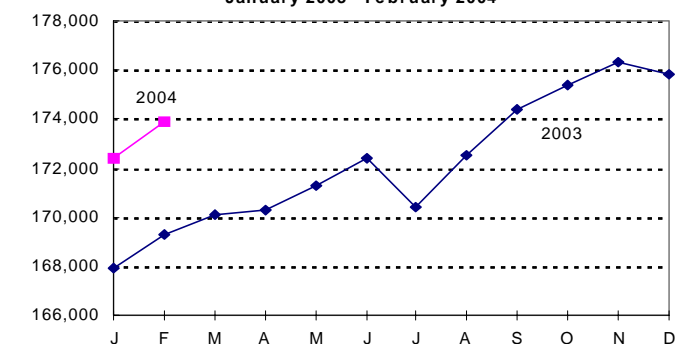
Nonfarm employment in the Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers MSA rose 1,500 to total 173,900 in February. Five major sectors added jobs over the month.

Government, with seasonal gains at educational facilities, had the largest increase (1,000). Professional-business services, and leisure-hospitality advanced 300 jobs, each.

Over the year, nonfarm payroll jobs added 4,600, for a growth rate of 2.7 percent. Gains in nine major sectors were partly offset by a drop of 700 in the manufacturing sector.

Yearly increases ranged from 100 in information to 1,600 in trade, transportation, and utilities. Most of the gain in trade, transportation, and utilities was posted in trade, with retail trade adding 700 and wholesale trade gaining 600.

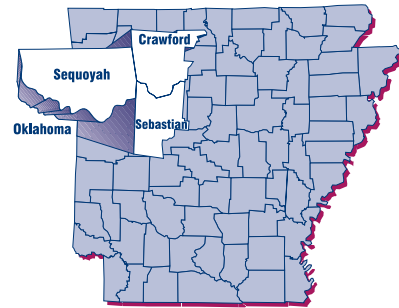
Fayetteville-Springdale-Rogers MSA
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs
January 2003 - February 2004



Hours and Earnings of Production Workers in Manufacturing Industries

	Feb. 04	Jan. 04	Feb. 03
Average Weekly Earnings	\$499.11	\$529.02	\$512.83
Average Weekly Hours	38.1	40.6	38.1
Average Hourly Earnings	13.10	13.03	13.46

Fort Smith Metropolitan Statistical Area



Job Total Slips in February

Total nonfarm payroll jobs for the Fort Smith MSA decreased by 100 to 98,700 in February 2004. Nonfarm payroll jobs were lost in four major sectors: manufacturing, information, professional-business services, and education- health services. These groups posted losses of 100 jobs each. Seasonal hiring in the government sector accounted for an increase of 300 jobs for the month.

A year-to-year comparison shows an increase of 100 for the February 2004 nonfarm jobs total. A construction increase of 400 represented the largest gain for the period. Other sectors recording increases were, trade-transportation-utilities +300, leisure-hospitality + 200, manufacturing + 200, and natural resources-mining + 100. Job losses in four major industries totaled 1,100 and nearly offset the gains. The largest reduction was 400, recorded in both education-health services and professional-business services. Employment services and hospitals accounted for most of the job cuts from February 2003 to February 2004.

Nonfarm Payroll Jobs

North American Industry Classification	Feb. 04	Jan. 04	Feb. 03
Total Nonfarm	98,700	98,800	98,600
Goods Producing	31,200	31,300	30,500
Natural Resources & Mining	1,000	1,000	900
Construction	4,600	4,600	4,200
Manufacturing	25,600	25,700	25,400
Durable Goods	14,700	14,800	15,000
Electrical Equipment	6,100	6,200	5,900
Nondurable Goods	10,900	10,900	10,400
Food	7,600	7,500	6,800
Service Providing	67,500	67,500	68,100
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	19,600	19,600	19,300
Wholesale Trade	3,200	3,200	3,200
Retail Trade	10,800	10,800	10,700
General Merchandise Stores	3,400	3,400	3,400
Transportation, Warehouse, & Utilities	5,600	5,600	5,400
Truck Transportation	4,100	4,100	3,800
Information	1,500	1,600	1,700
Financial Activities	3,600	3,600	3,600
Professional & Business Services	9,000	9,100	9,400
Employment Services	3,700	3,800	4,200
Education & Health Services	12,500	12,600	12,900
Health Care & Social Assistance	12,400	12,300	12,400
Hospitals	4,400	4,400	4,900
Leisure & Hospitality	7,000	7,000	6,800
Other Services	2,700	2,700	2,800
Government	11,600	11,300	11,600
Federal Government	1,200	1,200	1,300
State Government	2,000	1,800	1,900
Local Government	8,400	8,300	8,400

Hours & Earnings of Production Workers

Manufacturing Industries

	February 04	January 04	February 03
Average Weekly Earnings	\$512.26	\$510.45	\$528.98
Average Weekly Hours	38.4	38.7	37.2
Average Hourly Earnings	\$13.34	\$13.19	\$14.22

Little Rock - North Little Rock Metropolitan Statistical Area



Nonfarm Payroll Jobs

North American Industry Classification	Feb. 04	Jan. 04	Feb. 03
Total Nonfarm	314,800	315,000	313,800
Goods Producing	40,600	40,700	41,300
Natural Resources, Mining, & Construction	16,500	16,600	16,300
Special Trade Contractors	9,500	9,500	9,300
Manufacturing	24,100	24,100	25,000
Durable Goods	14,700	14,700	15,400
Fabricated Metals	3,000	3,000	3,100
Computer & Electronic Equipment	2,300	2,300	2,200
Transportation Equipment	3,200	3,200	3,400
Nondurable Goods	9,400	9,400	9,600
Service Providing	274,200	274,300	272,500
Trade, Transportation, & Utilities	65,900	66,500	66,300
Wholesale Trade	15,800	15,800	15,800
Retail Trade	33,600	34,100	33,500
Food & Beverage Stores	4,600	4,600	4,600
General Merchandise Stores	7,600	7,900	7,400
Transportation, Warehouse, & Utilities	16,500	16,600	17,000
Information	9,200	9,300	9,200
Telecommunications	5,100	5,100	5,100
Financial Activities	19,700	19,600	19,100
Professional & Business Services	38,700	38,400	38,900
Computer Systems	5,000	5,000	5,100
Employment Services	7,800	7,800	7,800
Education & Health Services	40,700	40,600	40,100
Hospitals	12,700	12,700	12,500
Leisure & Hospitality	24,300	24,400	23,700
Food Services	18,300	18,600	18,500
Other Services	11,800	11,800	12,000
Government	63,900	63,700	63,200
Federal Government	9,200	9,300	9,200
State Government	29,600	29,300	29,200
Local Government	25,100	25,100	24,800

Employment Dips Slightly

The number of nonfarm payroll jobs dipped 200 in the Little Rock-North Little Rock MSA in February. Four of ten major industry sectors contributed to the decline.

Trade, transportation and utilities dropped 600, making up the largest single industry reduction between months. More than 80 percent of this employment decrease was traced to retail trade where general merchandise stores continued seasonal cut-backs.

Four major groups combined for 700 job increases in February. Professional-business services and government rose 300 and 200, respectively. Smaller gains were posted in financial activities and education-health.

Five major industries added 2,700 jobs and four dropped 1,700, producing a net gain in the nonfarm total over the year. Job increases ranged from a low of 200 in natural resources and construction to a high of 700 in government. Manufacturing jobs, down 900, provided the greatest hindrance to the year-to-year gain.

Hours and Earnings of Production Workers

	Manufacturing Industries			Durable Goods Industries		
	Feb. 04	Jan. 04	Feb. 03	Feb. 04	Jan. 04	Feb. 03
Average Weekly Earnings	\$599.09	\$595.85	\$565.65	\$623.45	\$605.32	\$558.80
Average Weekly Hours	43.1	42.5	41.5	44.5	42.9	40.0
Average Hourly Earnings	\$13.90	\$14.02	\$13.63	\$14.01	\$14.11	\$13.97